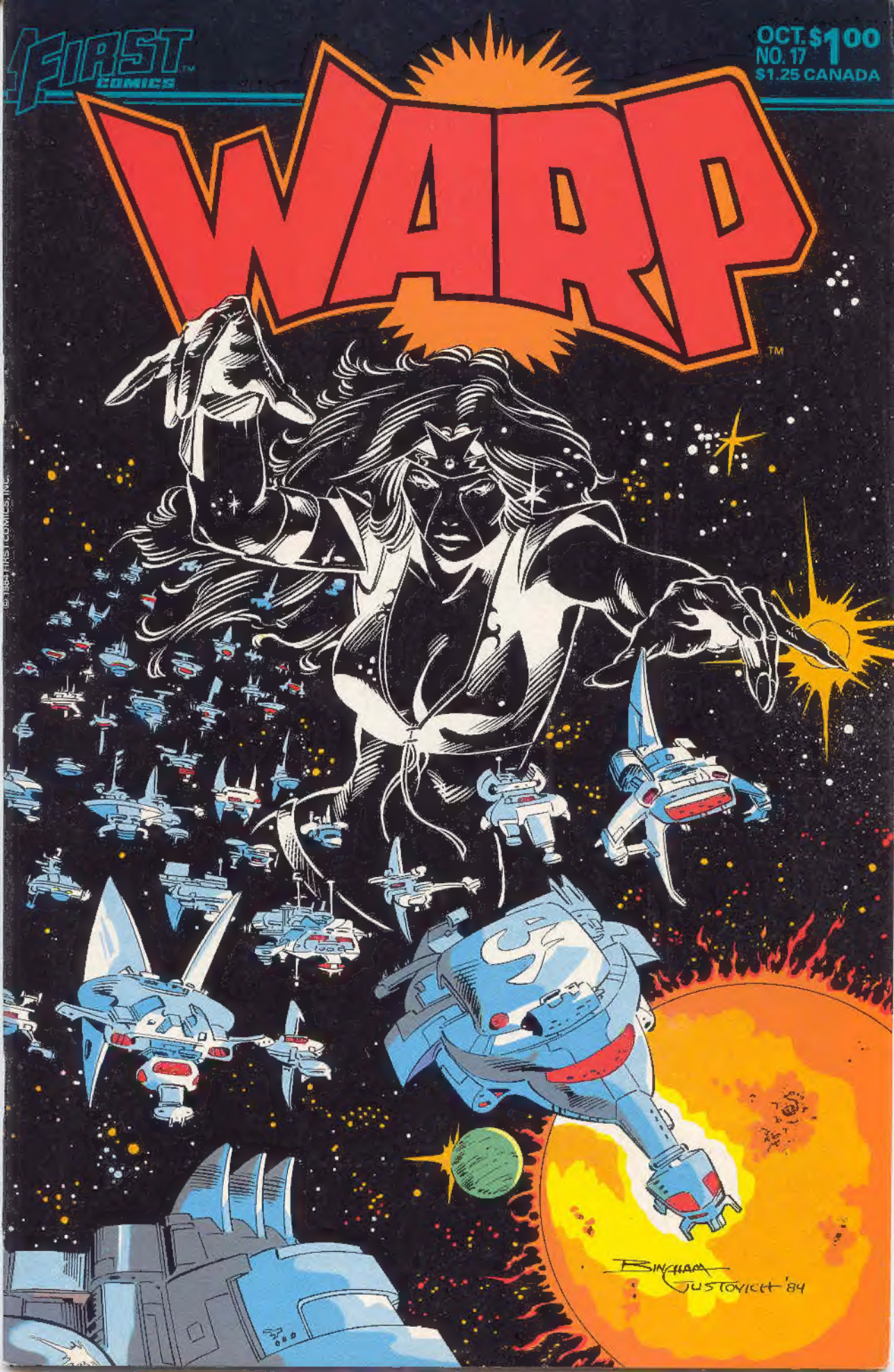
FIRST COMICS
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NO. 17
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WARP
BINCHAM
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warped words

c/o FIRST COMICS,
1014 DAVIS STREET, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS 60201

This issue marks something of an ending and a new beginning for **Warp**: the end of our Outrider back-up series, and the beginning of full-length Warp stories in every issue.

This month, Outrider finds himself fighting alongside Sargon, and the two of them will soon join forces with Cumulus and Chaos as the Warp saga heads in an exciting new direction.

This is also the last *monthly* issue of **Warp** — at least for the time being — as we shift over to a bi-monthly schedule. But although you'll have to wait an additional month, you won't want to miss the full-length **Warp** #18 and the startling transformation of Lord Cumulus!

And since **Jerry Bingham** is busy pencilling 28 pages for the next issue, we figured this was as good a place as any to run the enthusiastic letters we received on Jerry's adaptation of **Beowulf** — the First Graphic Novel:

Dear Rick:

When I first read the graphic novel Beowulf, the word "Conan" went through my mind, but as I went back to read the page of credits (and the "adapted from the 8th Century epic poem" sentence) I put that thought to the back of my mind.

The story and art of Beowulf are both of a high standard. Often the comics which feature "barbarians" today are stale and samey; it seems that the companies who produce these comics don't realize that they've used the character to his full extent and cannot take it any further (or perhaps they do realize it and are only out to make "a fast buck"). But this wasn't the case with Beowulf.

Congratulations on a very good graphic novel. I hope all the future ones you produce are of the same high standard. Well done!

Wieslaw Tumulka
14 Sheerstock
Haddenham, Buckingham-shire
England HP17 8EN

Dear Mike and Jerry:

For the first time I've decided to write a letter of comment to a comics company concerning its recent publication of their graphic novel. And it being number one has nothing to do with it either.

The story is not new, since it's nearly — or over — 1,200 years old. The art, on the other hand, is something else! Bingham's rendition of Beowulf and his army is beautiful. But the most beautiful piece of art was the page that began Chapter 2 (what I wouldn't give to own that original art)! Also, Jerry's drawing of Grendel was perfect.

I could go on and on with my ravings, but I think it would be best to stop here. However, I do wish to say one more thing: Ken Bruzenak's letters went along perfectly with Jerry's art. No other letterer would — or could — have done a job this good.

Kevin T. Brown
7846F W. Lawrence Ave.
Norridge, IL 60656

Ken Bruzenak *is picking up quite a fan following as a result of his exceptional work. For those of you who may*

underestimate the importance of lettering to the overall look of a comic, check out Ken's work on **American Flagg!**. *A letterer's work is not restricted to word balloons — it encompasses virtually every "word" that appears in a comic book, from titles to sound effects.*

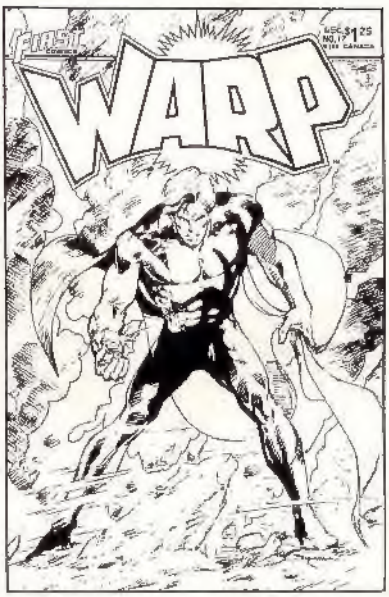
To Mike, Rick, et al.:

I would like to thank you all for the advance copy of your First graphic novel, Beowulf. I really enjoyed the way Jerry adapted it into art form as well as the narration. I will be sure and relate my feelings on the novel to all COMICAST's listeners. Jerry Bingham's artwork on Beowulf made me feel as if the demon was hot on my trail. This was truly a *graphic* novel! And you can quote me on that.

Stay outta' trouble.

Stephen Scott Beau Smith
COMICAST-FM
#1 Fourth Street
Barboursville, WV 25504

Thanks, Beau, I think I will.



NEXT ISSUE: The first of our 28-page book-length extravaganzas! Cumulus undergoes a drastic transformation, and things will never be the same for Sargon, Outrider, and Chaos — or anybody else! See you in August!

— Rick Oliver

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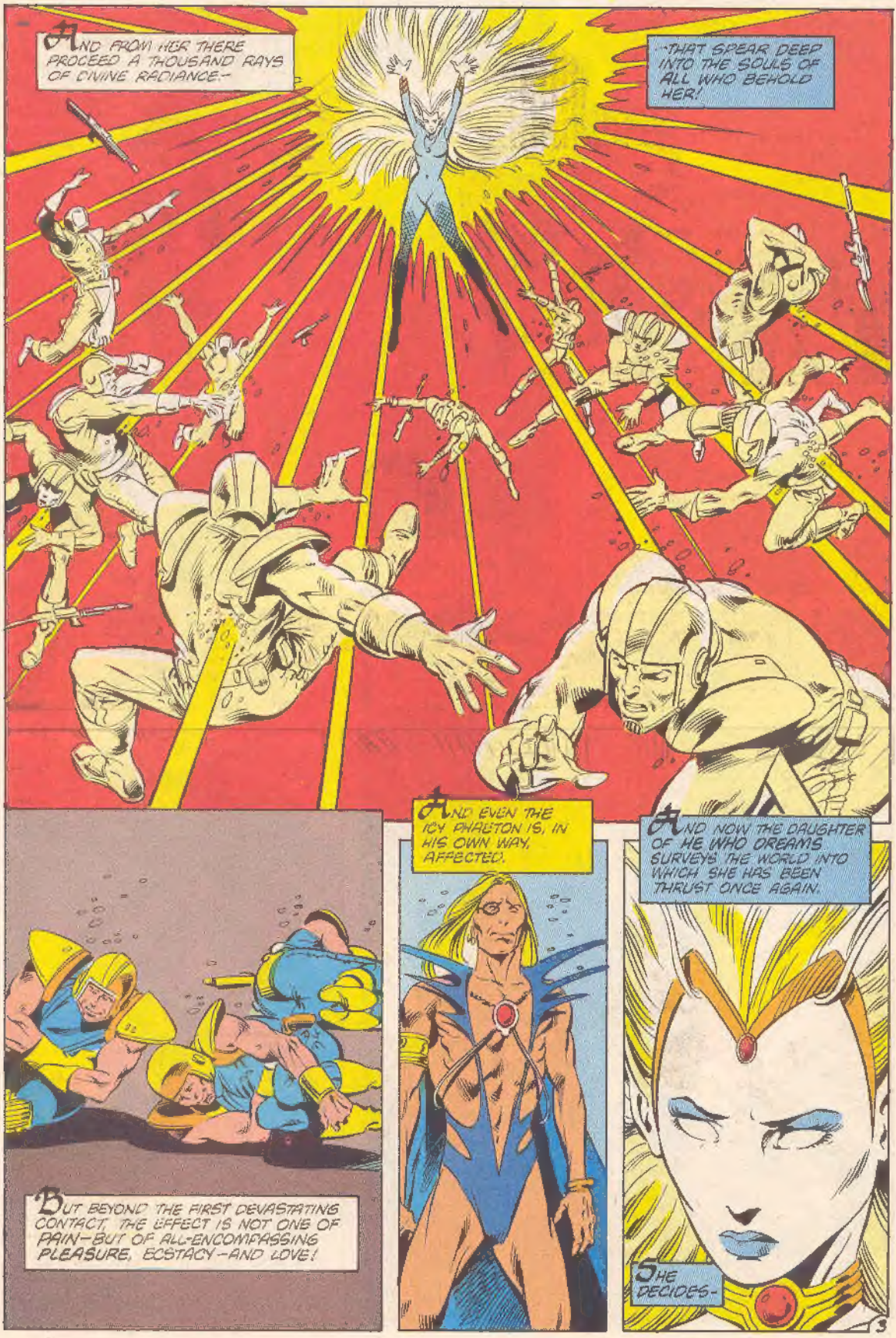
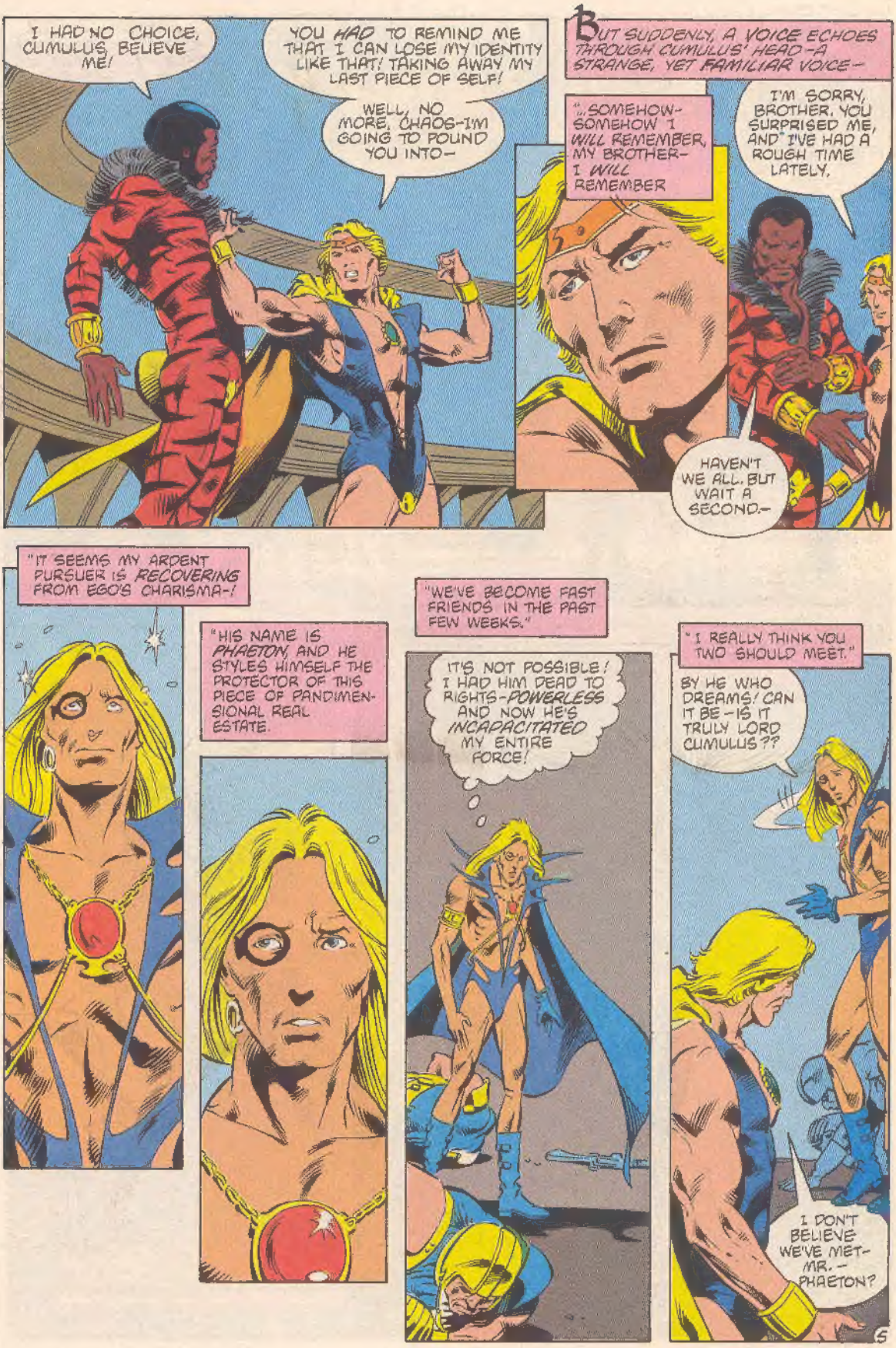
A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION

CHAMPION
WARP
FOR ATTEMPTING TO INVADE HOLY FEN-RA-FOR BEING A MENACE TO THE SURVIVAL OF CYNOSURE*-YOU, PRINCE CHAOS ARE ADJUDGED GUILTY AND SENTENCED TO VAPORIZATION!
EASY THERE BOYS-I CAN EXPLAIN EVERYTHING-!
Peter B. Gillis
STORY
Jerry Bingham
PENCILS
Mike Gustovich
INKS
Ken Bruzenak
LETTERS
Janice Cohen
COLORS
Rick Oliver
EDITOR
BASED ON CHARACTERS AND CONCEPTS CREATED BY Stuart Gordon AND Bury St Edmund
*LAST ISSUE-RICK.

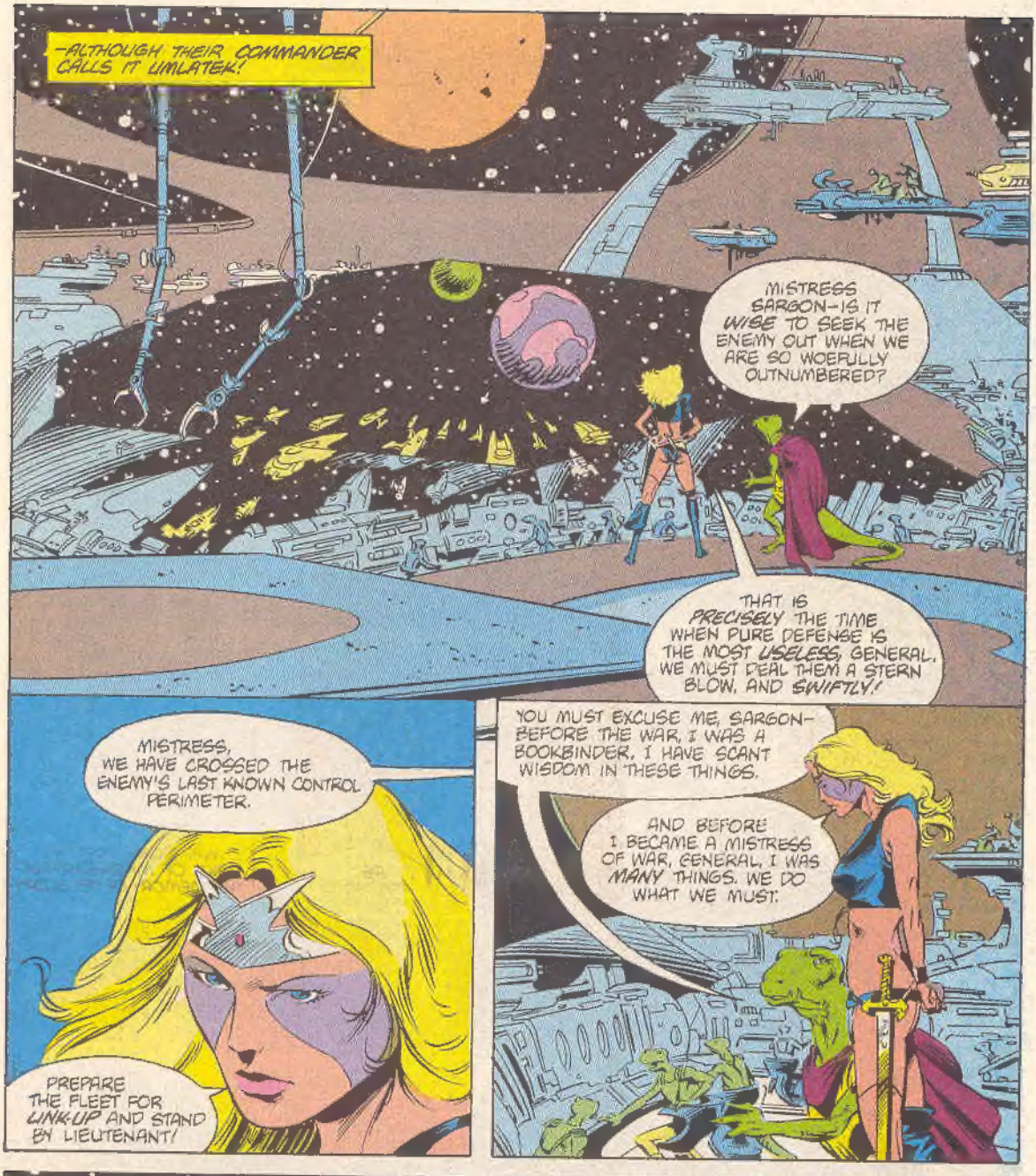
LOOK, CHAOS-THIS IS THE PROTECTOR OF CYNOSURE YOU'RE TALKING TO, NOT SOME BUMPKIN!
LISTEN, PHAETON THIS WAS ALL JUST A-WAIT- THAT LIGHT-!
BY HE WHO DREAMS! IT'S MY BROTHER-LORD CUMULUS- WARPING IN!
CHAOS! HALT-OR WE FIRE!
BROTHER, DEAR! AM I EVER GLAD TO SEE YOU!
CHAOS? I DON'T UNDERSTAND-IS THIS CYNOSURE? WHY ARE YOU-?
NO TIME TO EXPLAIN! WE MUST MAKE CONTACT!
NO, CHAOS-DON'T DO THIS-!
I DON'T WANT TO BECOME-
A GREATER LIGHT FLARES NOW-
--AND SUDDENLY, CUMULUS AND CHAOS ARE NO MORE- SUPPLANTED BY THE DELICATE FIGURE OF EGO!

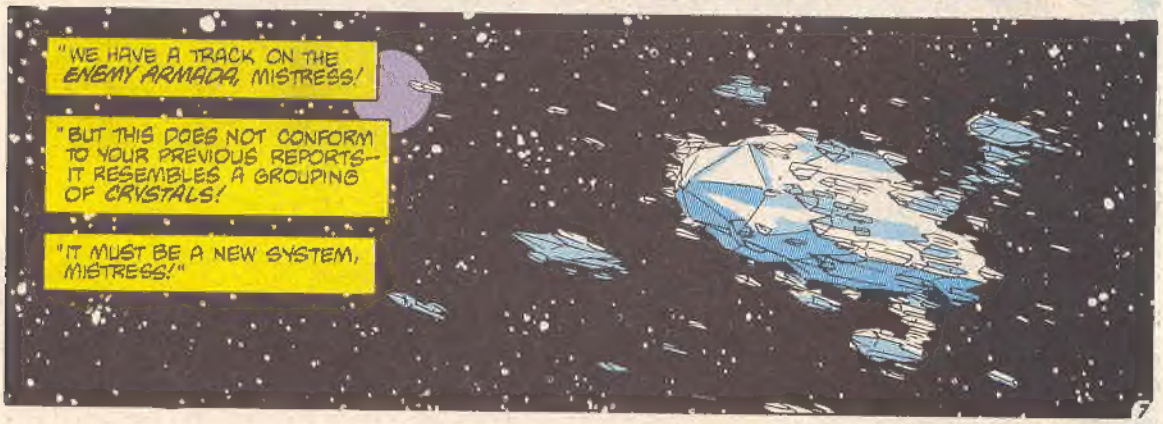

And from her there proceed a thousand rays of divine radiance-
-that spear deep into the souls of all who behold her!
But beyond the first devastating contact, the effect is not one of pain-but of all-encompassing pleasure, ecstacy-and love!
And even the icy Phaeton is, in his own way, affected.
And now the daughter of He who dreams surveys the world into which she has been thrust once again.
She decides-

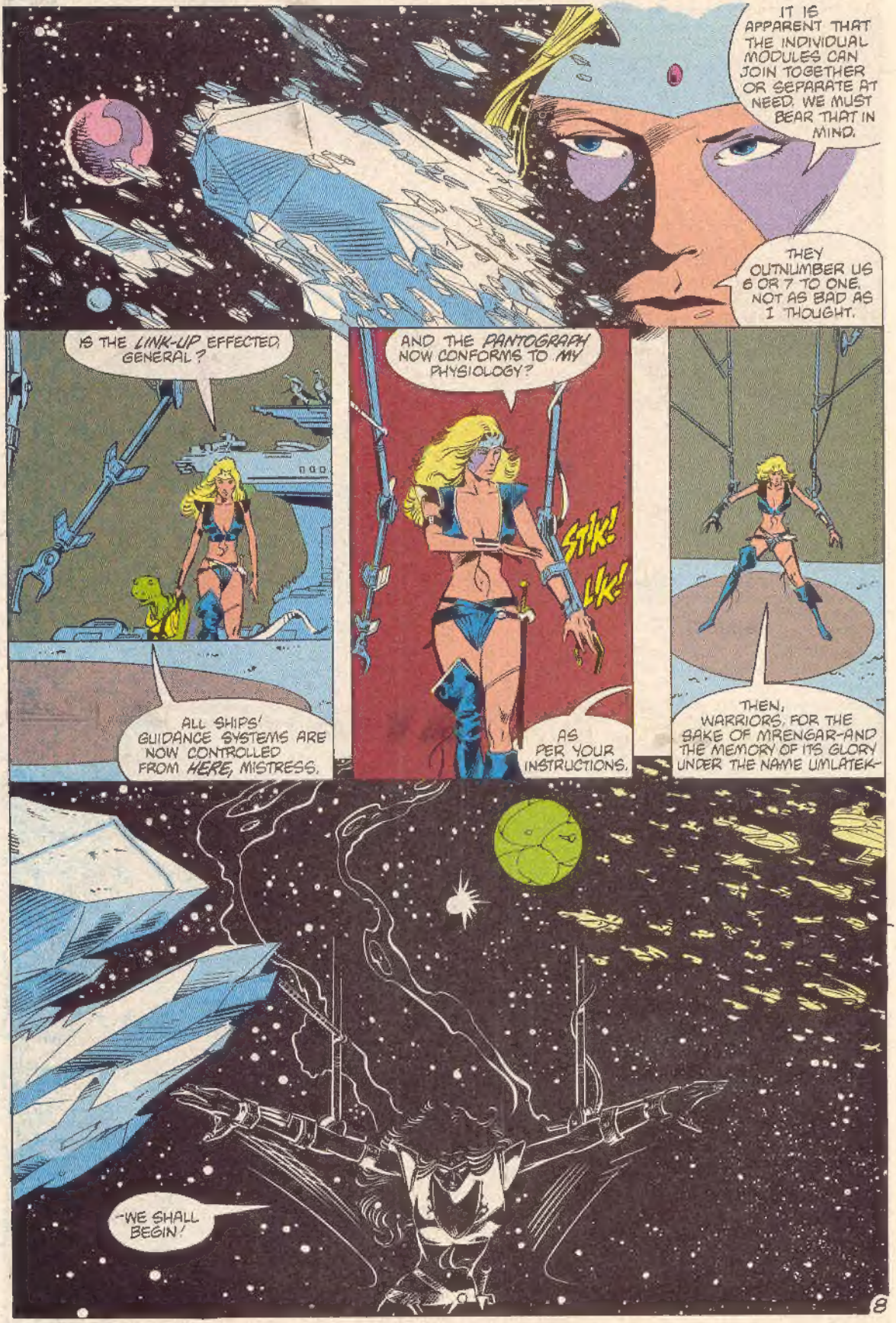
-AND FROM HER HANDS THERE SPRINGS A WHITE DOVE, LESS OF MATTER THAN OF THE SPIRIT-
-AND THIS PART OF HER SHE BIDS FLY, COMMENDING IT TO THE COSMOS--
-UNTIL IT FINDS IT'S TRUE PLACE, AND GIVES ITS GRACE WHERE IT SHALL REST.
AND NOW, SINCE THIS IS NOT HER TIME, SINCE HER LOVE CANNOT BE WELL RECEIVED AS YET-
-SHE SINKS BACK INTO THE LIGHT-
-AND GIVES HER BROTHERS BACK THEIR GIFT.
DAMNIT, CHAOS! WHY'D YOU HAVE TO DO THAT? WHY?
4


I HAD NO CHOICE, CUMULUS, BELIEVE ME!
YOU HAD TO REMIND ME THAT I CAN LOSE MY IDENTITY LIKE THAT! TAKING AWAY MY LAST PIECE OF SELF!
WELL, NO MORE, CHAOS-I'M GOING TO POUND YOU INTO-
BUT SUDDENLY, A VOICE ECHOES THROUGH CUMULUS' HEAD-A STRANGE, YET FAMILIAR VOICE-
"...SOMEHOW-SOMEHOW I WILL REMEMBER, MY BROTHER-I WILL REMEMBER
I'M SORRY, BROTHER, YOU SURPRISED ME, AND I'VE HAD A ROUGH TIME LATELY.
HAVEN'T WE ALL. BUT WAIT A SECOND.-
"IT SEEMS MY ARDENT PURSUER IS RECOVERING FROM EGO'S CHARISMA-!
"HIS NAME IS PHAETON, AND HE STYLES HIMSELF THE PROTECTOR OF THIS PIECE OF PANDIMENSIONAL REAL ESTATE.
"WE'VE BECOME FAST FRIENDS IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS."
IT'S NOT POSSIBLE! I HAD HIM DEAD TO RIGHTS-POWERLESS AND NOW HE'S INCAPACITATED MY ENTIRE FORCE!
"I REALLY THINK YOU TWO SHOULD MEET."
BY HE WHO DREAMS! CAN IT BE-IS IT TRULY LORD CUMULUS??
I DON'T BELIEVE WE'VE MET-MR.-PHAETON?

AFTER ALL THESE MILLENNIA, YOU HAVE RETURNED! CYNOSURE HAS SORELY MISSED YOUR PROTECTOR-SHIP-I HAVE BEEN UNWORTHY TO FILL YOUR SHOES!
I WILL GLADLY STEP ASIDE FOR YOU AT THE MEREST WORD!
MILLENIA? RETURNED?
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? PLEASE -GET UP.
FORGIVE ME-BUT I COULD NOT MISTAKE THE ANCIENT LEGENDS COME TO LIFE-NO MATTER WHAT THE FORM.
CHAOS-WOULD YOU PLEASE TELL ME WHAT THIS GUY IS JABBERING ABOUT?
I'M SURE I DON'T HAVE THE FAINTEST IDEA DEAR BROTHER!
MANY UNIVERSES AWAY, THE GREAT ARMADA OF THE MRENGARE! SLICES THROUGH THE VOID AT MULTI-LIGHT VELOCITY-
-IN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO SAFEGUARD THEIR HOME WORLD-A PLANET THEY CALL MRENGAR-


—ALTHOUGH THEIR COMMANDER CALLS IT LIMLATEK!
MISTRESS SARGON—IS IT WISE TO SEEK THE ENEMY OUT WHEN WE ARE SO WOEFULLY OUTNUMBERED?
THAT IS PRECISELY THE TIME WHEN PURE DEFENSE IS THE MOST USELESS, GENERAL. WE MUST DEAL THEM A STERN BLOW, AND SWIFTLY!
MISTRESS, WE HAVE CROSSED THE ENEMY'S LAST KNOWN CONTROL PERIMETER.
PREPARE THE FLEET FOR LINK-UP AND STAND BY LIEUTENANT!
YOU MUST EXCUSE ME, SARGON— BEFORE THE WAR, I WAS A BOOKBINDER. I HAVE SCANT WISDOM IN THESE THINGS.
AND BEFORE I BECAME A MISTRESS OF WAR, GENERAL, I WAS MANY THINGS. WE DO WHAT WE MUST.


"WE HAVE A TRACK ON THE ENEMY ARMADA, MISTRESS!
"BUT THIS DOES NOT CONFORM TO YOUR PREVIOUS REPORTS— IT RESEMBLES A GROUPING OF CRYSTALS!
"IT MUST BE A NEW SYSTEM, MISTRESS!"


IT IS APPARENT THAT THE INDIVIDUAL MODULES CAN JOIN TOGETHER OR SEPARATE AT NEED. WE MUST BEAR THAT IN MIND.
THEY OUTNUMBER US 6 OR 7 TO ONE. NOT AS BAD AS I THOUGHT.
IS THE LINK-UP EFFECTED, GENERAL?
ALL SHIPS' GUIDANCE SYSTEMS ARE NOW CONTROLLED FROM HERE, MISTRESS.
AND THE PANTOGRAPH NOW CONFORMS TO MY PHYSIOLOGY?
STIK!
LIK!
AS PER YOUR INSTRUCTIONS.
THEN, WARRIORS, FOR THE SAKE OF MRENGAR-AND THE MEMORY OF ITS GLORY UNDER THE NAME UMLATEK-
-WE SHALL BEGIN!

THE EX-MISTRESS OF WAR OF FEN-RA
-AND ONE WING BEGINS A BROADSIDE
THE MOVEMENTS COME SWIFTER NOW A DEEP THRUST WITH THE LEFT
-AND THE OTHER WING BLAZES INTO THE FRAY WITH UTTER PRECISION

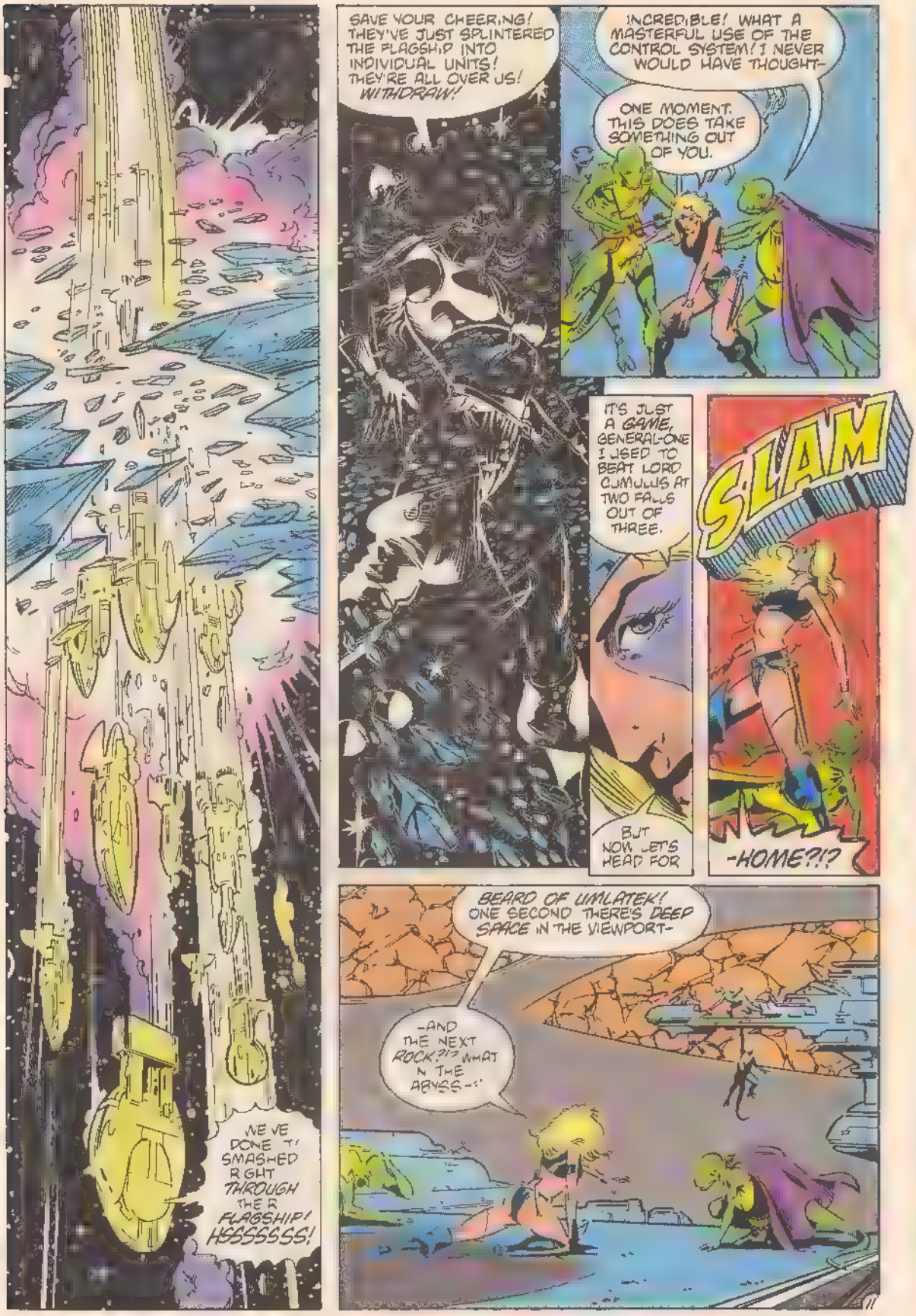
THE FEEL IMPROVES—AS SARGON MOVES THE FLEET FLAWLESSLY WITH EACH TWIST AND MOTION SHE NEARLY BECOMES THE FLEET IN TROTH!

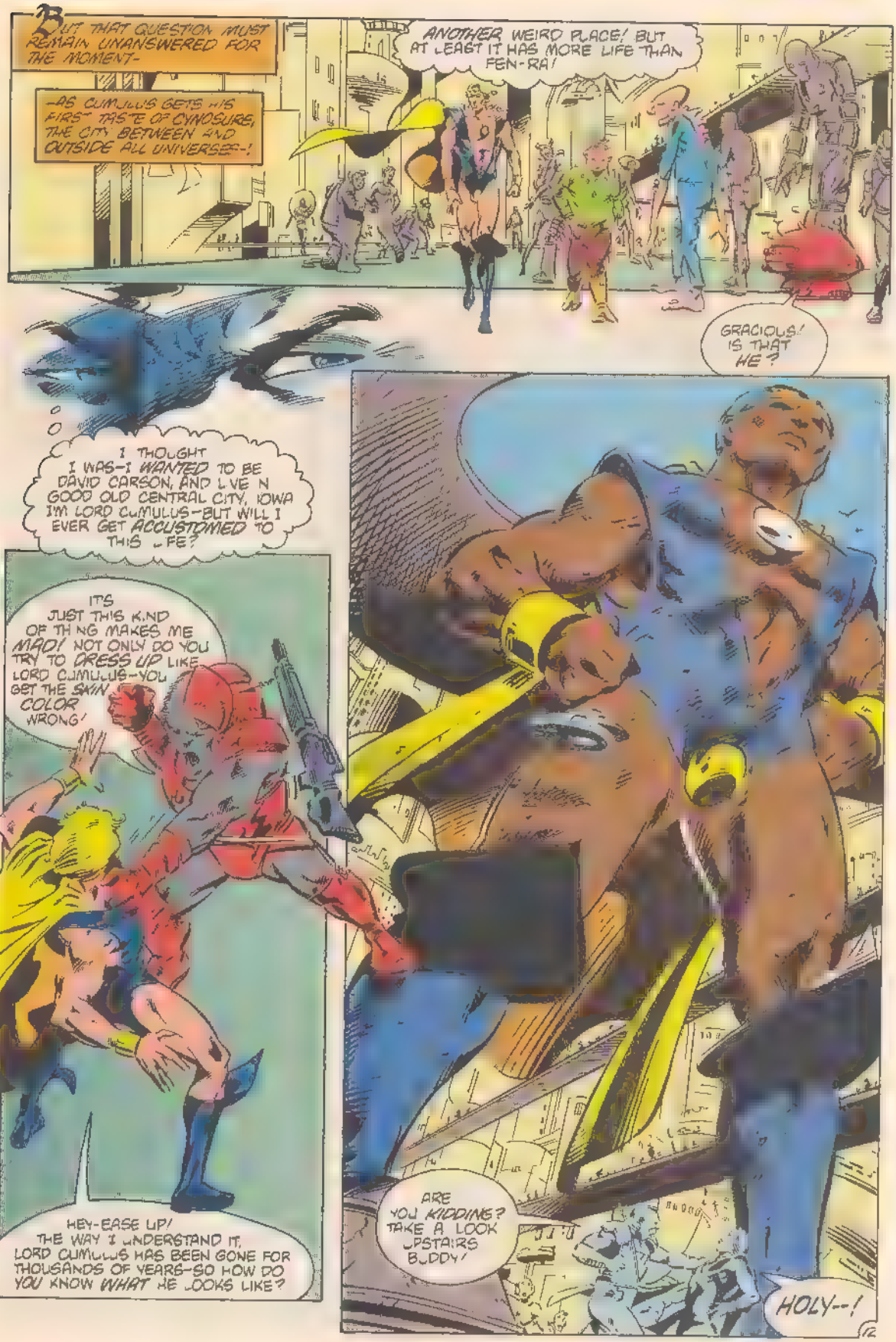
AS SHE STRIKES AGAIN AND AGAIN WHEREVER THE FOE'S CONFIGURATION IS WEAKEST!

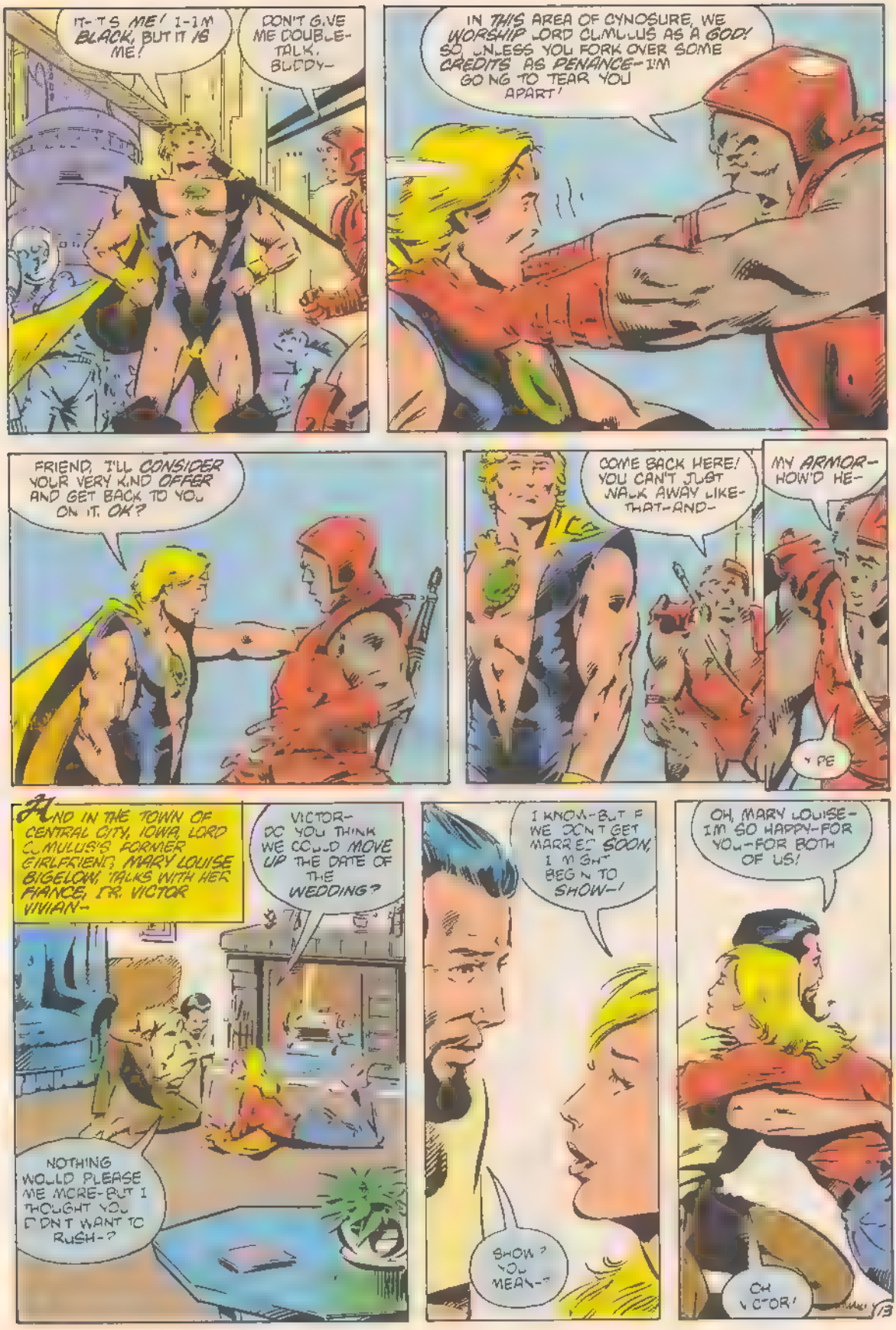
FINALLY SHE SEES IN THE VIEWTANK A FATAL OPENING

SHE BRINGS HER ARMS UP

—AND THEN DOWN INTO THE HEART OF THE ALIEN ARMADA

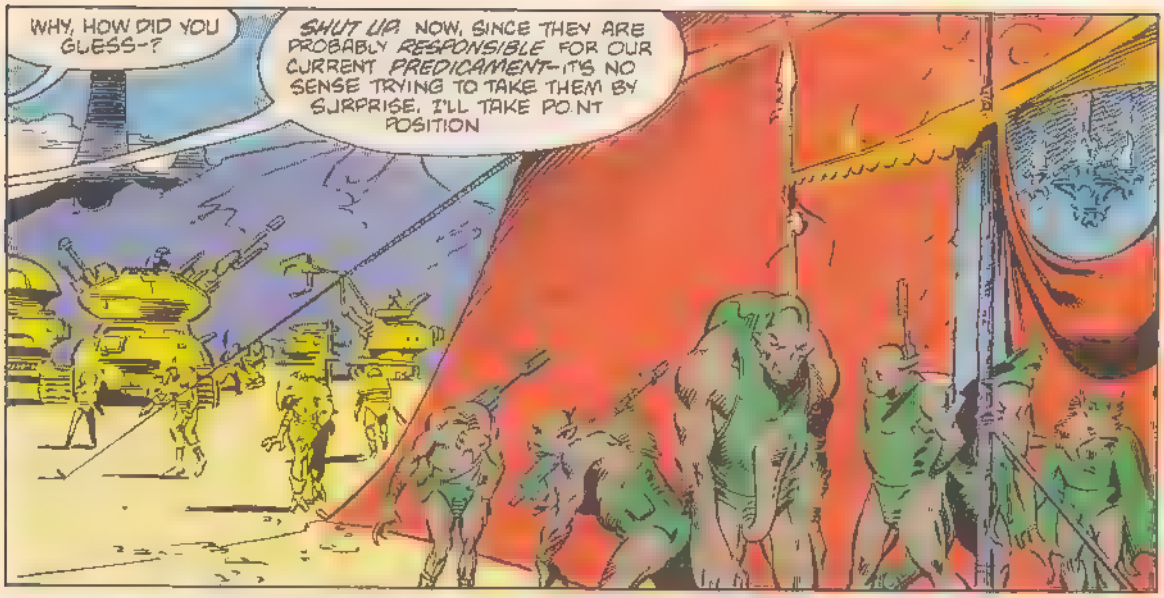

WE'VE DONE IT! SMASHED RIGHT THROUGH THEIR FLAGSHIP! HSSSSSS!
SAVE YOUR CHEERING! THEY'VE JUST SPLINTERED THE FLAGSHIP INTO INDIVIDUAL UNITS! THEY'RE ALL OVER US! WITHDRAW!
INCREDIBLE! WHAT A MASTERFUL USE OF THE CONTROL SYSTEM! I NEVER WOULD HAVE THOUGHT-
ONE MOMENT. THIS DOES TAKE SOMETHING OUT OF YOU.
IT'S JUST A GAME, GENERAL-ONE I USED TO BEAT LORD CUMULUS AT TWO FALLS OUT OF THREE.
BUT NOW LET'S HEAD FOR
SLAM
-HOME?!?
BEARD OF UMLATEK! ONE SECOND THERE'S DEEP SPACE IN THE VIEWPORT-
-AND THE NEXT ROCK?!? WHAT IN THE ABYSS-!

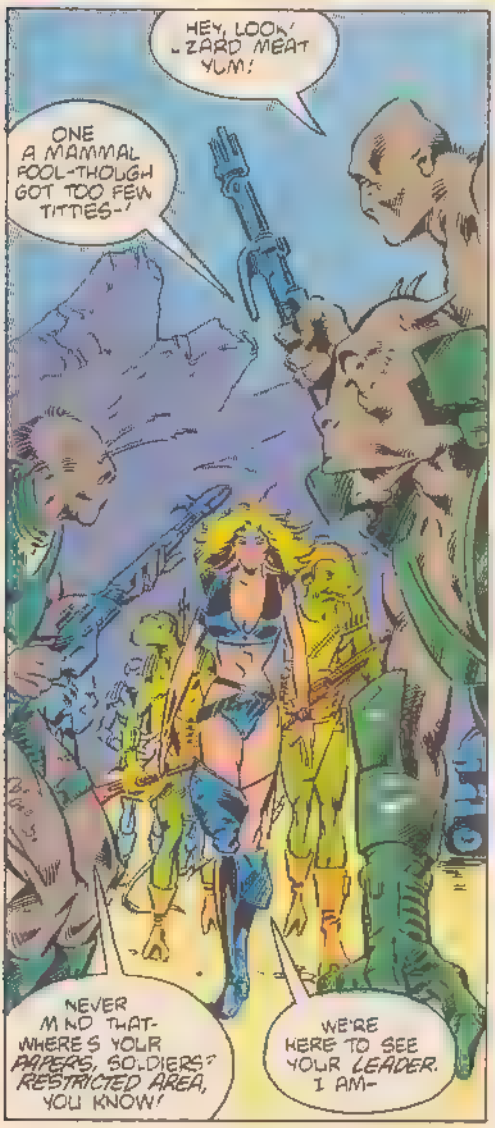

But that question must remain unanswered for the moment-
-as Cumulus gets his first taste of cynosure, the city between and outside all universes-!
Another weird place! But at least it has more life than Fen-Ra!
Gracious! Is that he?
I thought I was-I wanted to be David Carson, and live in good old Central City, Iowa I'm Lord Cumulus-but will I ever get accustomed to this life?
It's just this kind of thing makes me mad! Not only do you try to dress up like Lord Cumulus-you get the skin color wrong!
Hey-ease up! The way I understand it, Lord Cumulus has been gone for thousands of years-so how do you know what he looks like?
Are you kidding? Take a look upstairs buddy!
Holy--!

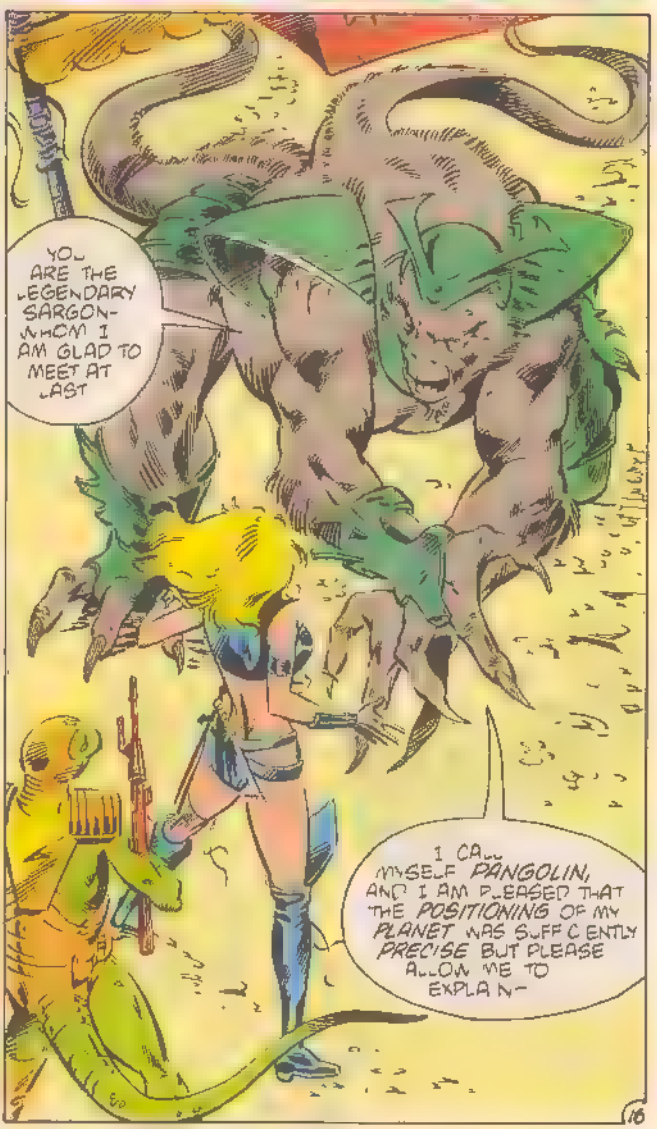

IT-T S ME! I-I M BLACK, BUT IT IS ME!
DON'T G.VE ME DOUBLE-TALK, BUDDY-
IN THIS AREA OF CYNOSURE, WE WORSHIP LORD CUMULUS AS A GOD! SO, UNLESS YOU FORK OVER SOME CREDITS AS PENANCE- I'M GO NG TO TEAR YOU APART!
FRIEND, I'LL CONSIDER YOUR VERY KIND OFFER AND GET BACK TO YOU ON IT. OK?
COME BACK HERE! YOU CAN'T JUST WALK AWAY LIKE-THAT-AND-
MY ARMOR- HOW'D HE-
Y PE
AND IN THE TOWN OF CENTRAL CITY, IOWA, LORD CUMULUS'S FORMER GIRLFRIEND, MARY LOUISE BIGELOW, TALKS WITH HER FIANCE, DR. VICTOR VIVIAN-
VICTOR- DO YOU THINK WE COULD MOVE UP THE DATE OF THE WEDDING?
NOTHING WOULD PLEASE ME MORE- BUT I THOUGHT YOU D DN T WANT TO RUSH-?
I KNOW- BUT F WE DON T GET MARR ED SOON, I M GHT BEG N TO SHOW-!
SHOW? YOU MEAN-?
OH, MARY LOUISE- I'M SO HAPPY- FOR YOU- FOR BOTH OF US!
OH VICTOR!

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT-THERE'S ATMOSPHERE-WE'RE APPARENTLY INSIDE A PLANET!
BUT THAT'S MADNESS! WE WERE IN DEEP SPACE! ANYTHING THE SIZE OF A PLANET WOULD HAVE SHOWN UP ON OUR DETECTORS
WE CAN PONDER ENIGMAS LATER, GENERAL! OUR FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS-
S GETTING OUT FROM UNDER
I JUST WISH WE KNEW WHETHER THE CANNON HAS TO BREAK THROUGH SIX MILES OF PLANET-OR 600-!
YOU'RE CERTAINLY TAKING THIS CALMLY, M'STRESS-!
YOU DON'T GET NERVOUS ABOUT REBINDING A BOOK, DO YOU GENERAL?
AH-IT. SEEMS WE WERE QUITE CLOSE TO THE SURFACE AFTER ALL.
ALL RIGHT MARINES - ALL WE KNOW ABOUT THIS PLACE IS THAT HE-WHO-DREAMS DON'T PLACE IT HERE FOR OUR DELECTATION! BE PREPARED FOR ANYTHING!

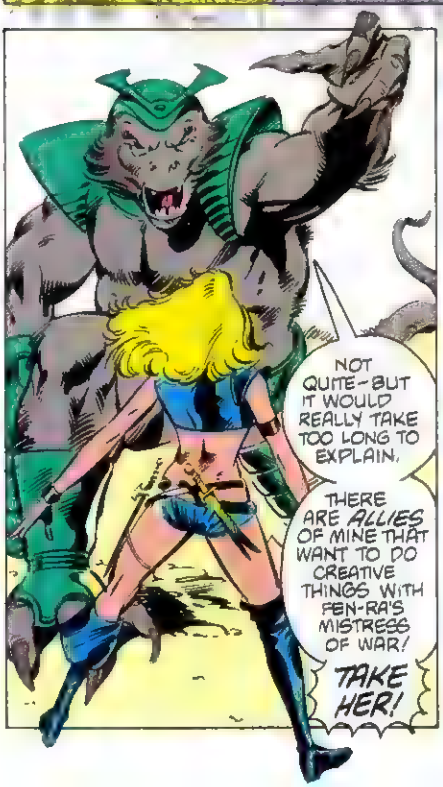
BEES SARKON IS NOT PREPARED FOR THE HAUNTING BEAUTY OF THE LAND IT IS NOW THEY HAVE BEEN LONG-
BUT THEY PRESS ON
MISTRESS WE DETECT HIGH METABOLISM LIFE THREE POINTS WEST-
ALL RIGHT CLOSE RANKS.
THIS MUST BE THE PLACE MEN-
IT LOOKS LIKE A NOMADIC CAMP AND YET THERES NOTHING PRIMITIVE ABOUT THEIR ORDNANCE!
CORPORAL- TRY TO REMEMBER YOU'RE A SPACE MARINE AND NOT AN ANTHROPOLOGIST-
15


WHY, HOW DID YOU GUESS-?
SHUT UP. NOW, SINCE THEY ARE PROBABLY RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR CURRENT PREDICAMENT-IT'S NO SENSE TRYING TO TAKE THEM BY SURPRISE, I'LL TAKE POINT POSITION


HEY, LOOK! LIZARD MEAT YUM!
ONE A MAMMAL FOOL-THOUGH GOT TOO FEW TITTES-!
NEVER MIND THAT- WHERE'S YOUR PAPERS, SOLDIERS? RESTRICTED AREA, YOU KNOW!
WE'RE HERE TO SEE YOUR LEADER. I AM-

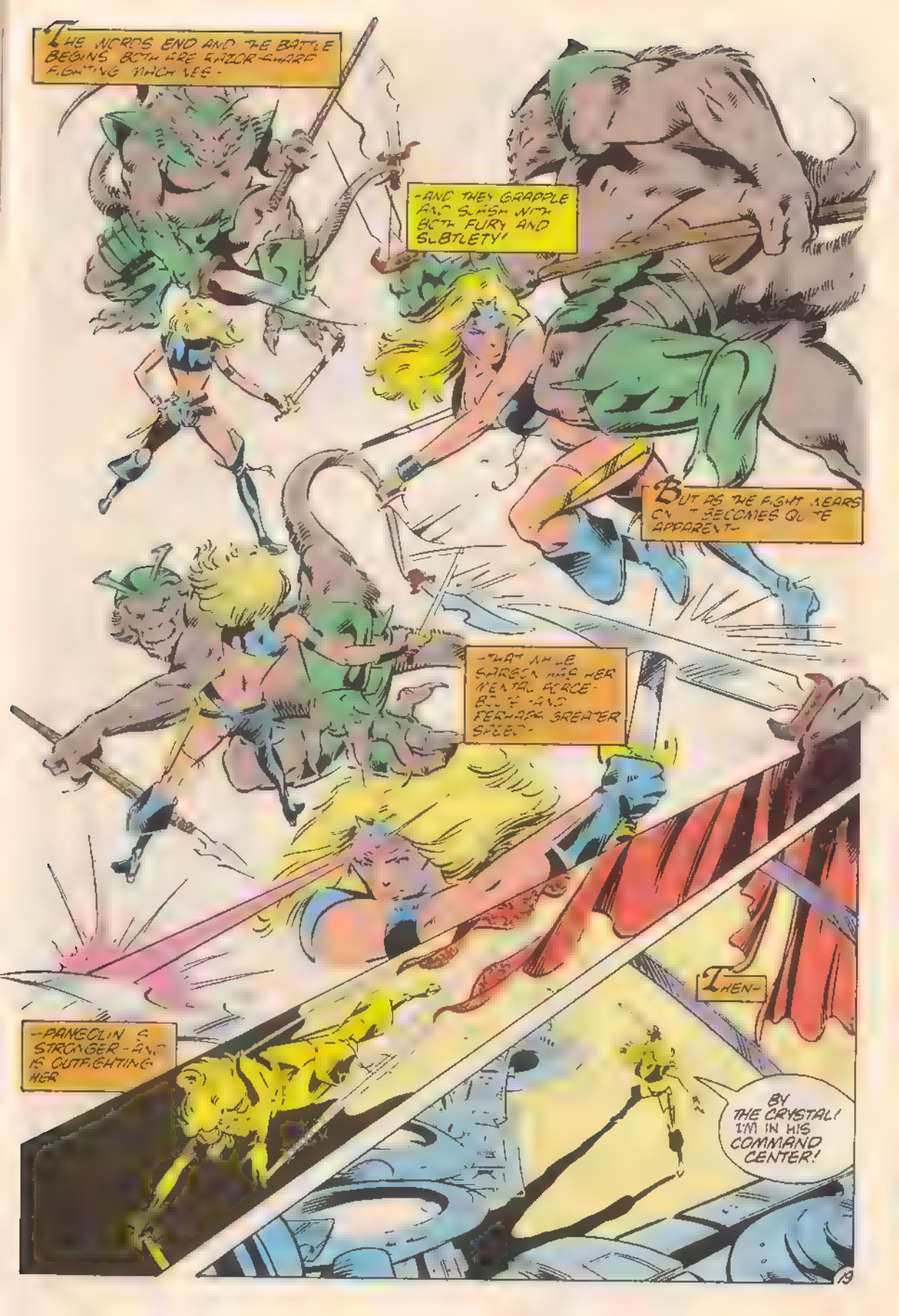

YOU ARE THE LEGENDARY SARGON- WHOM I AM GLAD TO MEET AT LAST
I CALL MYSELF PANGOLIN, AND I AM PLEASED THAT THE POSITIONING OF MY PLANET WAS SUFFICIENTLY PRECISE BUT PLEASE ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN-

THIS PLANET IS MINE, BUILT TO MY SPECIFICATIONS- AND LOCATED IN A SMALL SUBSPACE JUST OUTSIDE YOUR UNIVERSE-A VERY GOOD DEFENSE.
SO AFTER YOU DECIMATED MY FLEET- AND BECAUSE YOUR ARMADA WAS ALL WITHIN A PLANETARY DIAMETER-I DECIDED TO DROP MY PLANET INTO NORMAL SPACE AROUND YOUR FLEET- THUS GIVING A NEW MEANING TO THE TERM 'ENGLOBEMENT'!
I POSITIONED THE DROP SO THE FAMOUS SARGON'S SHIP WOULD BE QUITE NEAR THE SURFACE-CLOSE BY MY CAMP. THE REST OF THE FLEET IS DEEP IN THE MANTLE OR THE CORE, I'M AFRAID. AND THERE THEY'LL STAY.
AT LEAST YOU WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT A DECENT BURIAL. THEY HAVE THAT. BUT YOU I WANTED.
SO NOW IT'S THE OLD 'BUT-I-WANT-TO-HUMBLE-THE FAMOUS-SARGON-WITH-MY-BARE-HANDS' ROUTINE IS IT?
I BEGIN TO TIRE OF IT-!


NOT QUITE-BUT IT WOULD REALLY TAKE TOO LONG TO EXPLAIN.
THERE ARE ALLIES OF MINE THAT WANT TO DO CREATIVE THINGS WITH PEN-RA'S MISTRESS OF WAR!
TAKE HER!

AYE! TAKE ME- IF YOU CAN
MARINES- ATTACK-!

KEEP IT UP, MEN! THEY'RE NO MATCH FOR MRENGARI! WADE INTO THEM!
WHA- PANGOLIN! HE'S DUCKING OUT OF THE FIGHT!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS-
-YOUR LEADER IS THE ONE I WANT.
ARRRRH!
STOP HER! STOP HER!
I KNOW. I'M ABOUT TO LEARN WHAT IT MEANS TO CHALLENGE THE MISTRESS OF WAR!
PANGOLIN! YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM ME IN HERE!
IT'S A LESSON I'M MOST EAGER TO RECEIVE.



THE WORDS END AND THE BATTLE BEGINS BOTH ARE RAZOR-SHARP FIGHTING MACHINES-

-AND THEY GRAPPLE AND SLASH WITH BOTH FURY AND SUBTLETY!

BUT AS THE FIGHT WEARS ON IT BECOMES QUITE APPARENT-

-THAT WHILE SARGON HAS HER MENTAL FORCE-BOLTS -AND PERHAPS GREATER SPEED-

-PANGOLIN IS STRONGER-AND IS OUTFIGHTING HER

THEN-

BY THE CRYSTAL! I'M IN HIS COMMAND CENTER!

GET AWAY FROM THERE! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING-

NOT SO! THE WIZARD *LUGULBANDA* TRAINED ME WELL ENOUGH TO *DECIPHER* MACHINES AS SIMPLE AS THESE AT A GLANCE.

FOR EXAMPLE, THIS IS THE LEVER THAT POPS YOU IN AND OUT OF NORMAL SPACE! IF I PULL IT *HALFWAY DOWN*-

THE PLANET SHIFTS OUT OF PHASE ENOUGH SO THAT THE FLEET CAN BREAK FREE.

AND NOW I REALLY HAVE TO GO!

WHAT?!?!

GO AHEAD, SARGON- RUN! RUN IN *COWARDICE!* THIS IS *MY* PLANET- NOR ARE YOU OUT OF IT! RUN!

LATER THE MRANGARIAN SPACE MARINES SLAUGHTERED TO A MAN ARE DIED UP THEY WILL BE EATEN BY THOSE WHO FANCY SUCH THINGS

SHE SAVED THE FLEET SHE THINKS HE COULD HAVE BEATEN HER THERE WAS NO CHOICE IT WAS A PRUDENT RETREAT SHE TELLS HERSELF-

AND YET AS SHE WRAPS THE SITTEN CLOAK ARTIFICIALLY

SHE CAN ONLY FEEL THAT SHE HAS FINALLY LOST EVERYTHING - EVEN HONOR

TO BE CONTINUED IN OUTRIDER THIS ISSUE -

NEXT ISSUE

The END of the ROAD!

FIRST NOTES

YOU TOO, BUDDY! — part one

We've received a great deal of mail concerning the recent *Psychology Today* article entitled "R-Rated Comics." Maybe that's because I've been harping on similar issues from the opposite viewpoint, in this column for some time.

Whereas we have run a couple of these letters in our sundry mail columns (particularly in **American Flagg!**), I guess it is time I put my official comments in print. And *Psychology Today*'s official response as well.

My letter is addressed to Patrice D. Horn, editor, *Psychology Today* magazine.

Dear Ms. Horn:

Regarding your recent article on "R-Rated Comics," I am sorry to see that your writer didn't even attempt to call us to check out his rather outrageous and often inaccurate — assumptions.

The vast majority of publications DeMott noted in his article do not refer to themselves as "adult" comics — the very phrase carries salacious connotations that have nothing to do with most of the books he discussed. The level of sexuality in these comics is far lower than that commonly found in any other contemporary mass media, and the DeMott-praised Groo the Wanderer (a fine book, one I wish we published) is completely innocuous.

DeMott spends most of his time discussing our **American Flagg!**. It is a shame he doesn't understand that in order to follow a comic book story, one must read the words as well as look at the pictures. **Flagg** is a decidedly optimistic book — our society is faced with political and economic oblivion, and instead of accepting and succumbing to that, our heroes struggle for a better world — and they succeed in their struggle, one step at a time.

DeMott further exposes his lack of understanding with his line about deep, broad-based cynicism not being a norm in this country's working-class youth. Doesn't DeMott own a radio? Hasn't he ever listened to any rock and roll in the past thirty years? What planet does this guy come from?

Sincerely yours,
Mike Gold

Psychology Today's official response, which came more than two months after my initial letter:

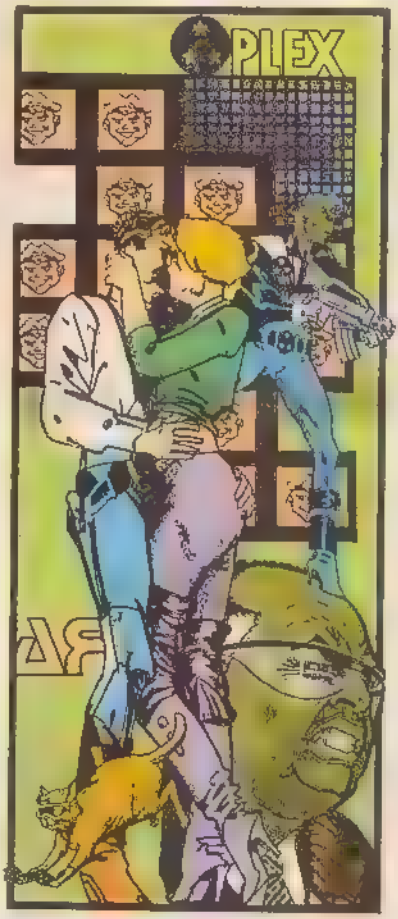
Dear Reader:

Thank you for your recent letter.

We appreciate your interest in *Psychology Today* and are glad to receive thoughtful comments such as yours.

The Editors

Well, hell, guys, thanks for your appreciation, and I'm looking forward to your next pontifications on American Culture.



YOU TOO, BUDDY — part two

In a recent issue of the *Comics Journal*, Gary Groth tried to compare both the First line and the Marvel/Epic line with R. Crumb's comics. "If Robert Crumb doesn't feel censored by putting a rating on his comix, First Comics and the Epic line have nothing to worry about."

Gary, there are some differences between our stuff and Crumb's. For example, much of Crumb's work focuses on frontal nudity and/or sexual subjugation — themes we're not terribly concerned about here at First Comics (nor, I dare say, over at Marvel/Epic). The phrase "for adults only" serves to *promote* Crumb's work; in this context it would be misleading to put a similar label on ours. People might wonder where all the frontal nudity went.

I have a great deal of respect for Crumb and I do not mean to imply that our stuff is necessarily better than his, but comparing ours to his is fatuous.

Perhaps we might be able to agree on a different label, Gary. How about "for somewhat mature readers?"

— Mike Gold

FIRST IN JUNE

American Flagg! #13 **Howard Chaykin** and guest-artists **Jim Sherman** and **Rick Burchett** start Raul off on his new career as Gretchen Holstrum reveals the secrets of her past in "Mother's Day!"

E-Man #19 — Zombies, voodoo doctors and street gangs — the perfect setting for "Hoodoo Blues," **Joe Staton's** musical **E-Man** epic inked by **Rick Burchett!**

Grimjack #3 — BlackJacMac rejoins Grimmer in a deadly family reunion as **John Ostrander** and **Timothy Truman** bring us "Blood Relations!" Meanwhile, getting snockered takes on a strange new meaning in "Old Mink," the **John Ostrander/Steve Bissette** Munden's Bar story.

Jon Sable, Freelance #17 — Jon must avenge the assassination of a Russian friend — but first, he's got to survive a lethal cross-country train ride from New York to the Los Angeles Olympics! "Deadly Games, part one" by **Mike Grell!**

Starslayer #21 — The fate of Black Thorn and the battle with death goddess Morrigan — by **John Ostrander, Timothy Truman** and **Hilary Barta!** And the origin of the Black Flame continues — by **Peter Gillis, Tom Sutton** and **Don Lomax!**

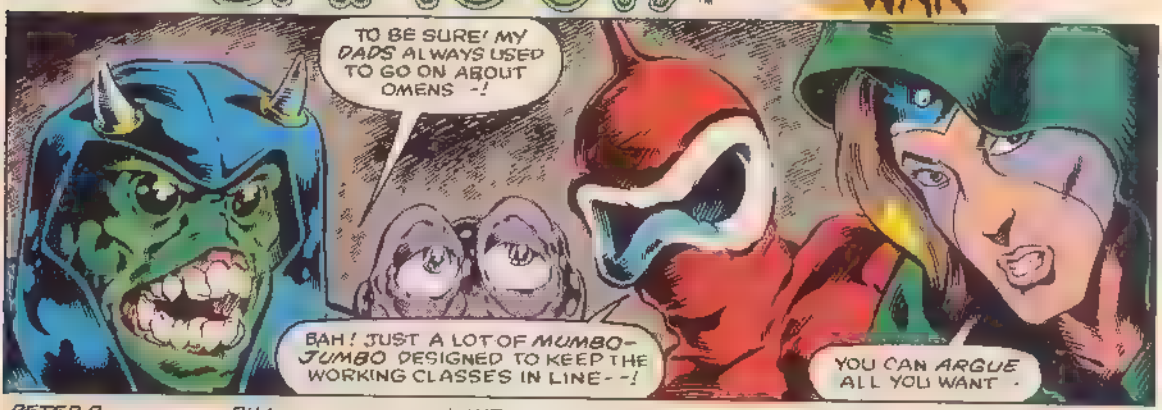
Warp #17 — Cumulus takes on Chaos in the depths of Cynosure, as The Outrider meets Sargon to confront the Masters of War! All this in two stories, both written by **Peter Gillis** and inked by **Mike Gustovich. Jerry Bingham** pencils the Cynosure lead, and **Bill Willingham** pencils the Outrider/Sargon back!

OUTRIDER
LOOK! A COMET! BUT WITH ITS HEAD IN THE SHAPE OF A BIRD!
IT'S AN OMEN! WE SHOULD ALL PRAY TO THE GODS!
AMONG THOSE GATHERED AROUND THE FIRE IN THE MILITARY CAMP, HOWEVER, THERE IS ONE WHO DOES NOT EVEN RAISE HER HEAD TO LOOK

AND HER NAME IS.

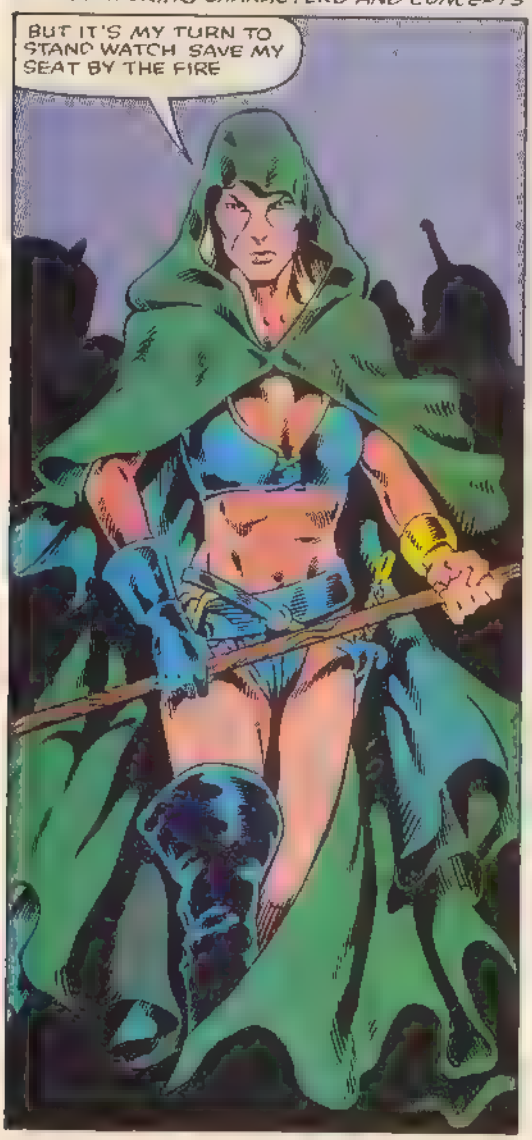
SARGON™

MISTRESS OF WAR



PETER B GILLIS STORY • BILL WILLINGHAM PENCILS • MIKE GUSTOVICH INKS • JANICE CHIANG LETTERS • RICK TAYLOR COLORS • RICK OLIVER EDITOR

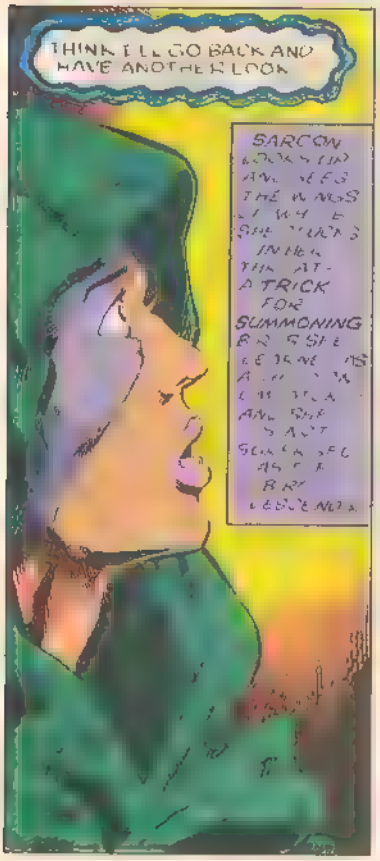
FEATURING CHARACTERS AND CONCEPTS CREATED BY STUART GORDON AND BURY ST. EDMUND



YET FAR AWAY
THIS IS IT! THE PLANET THE MOTHER STAR TOLD US HELD THE HEART OF THE SUNRISE! WITH ANY LUCK, ARCHANGEL, OUR QUEST WILL BE COMPLETED IN SHORT ORDER!
WITH ANY LUCK, THE ENEMY SAW US BLAZING ACROSS THE SKY AND WILL MAKE STEW OUT OF US, OUTRIDER!

WELL, INSTEAD OF PROPHESYING, MILADY, MAYBE YOU SHOULD TAKE A LOOK AROUND!
AS YOU COMMAND, MY SOVEIRGN LORD!

WELL, THERE SEEMS TO BE NO LACK OF SOLDIERS--BUT THEY'RE NOT ON ALERT. SO FAR, SO GOOD.
BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT THAT SENTRY I JUST PASSED -


THINK I'LL GO BACK AND HAVE ANOTHER LOOK
SARGON

AH, LITTLE WHITE ONE
HOW I WISH I COULD BE LIKE YOU! FREE, WITH NO THOUGHTS OF MISSIONS OR FAILURES.

BY HE WHO DREAMS - IT IS SARGON!! LITTLE SARGON FROM FEN-RA! AFTER ALL THESE AGES--IT'S ONE OF US!!
TELL ME A TALE, BIRD--TELL ME A TALE OF FREEDOM--!

SARGON --IT'S SARGON--!
I HAVE TO TELL REGULUS RIGHT AWAY-- AFTER ALL THIS TIME--!
WAIT! DON'T GO! DON'T LEAVE ME WITH NOTHING-- NOTHING BUT
NOTHING BUT A TEAR?
WHAT CAN THIS MEAN?
HALT! WHO GOES THERE?
OH YES, IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT, THAT IT IS!
SARGEANT KUG!
YOU SEE, THERE'S THIS LITTLE GAME I PLAYS WITH MY SENTRIES. YES I DO! I SNEAKS UP ON THEM, VERY QUIET--!
AND IF THEY'RE DRUNK, OR DREAMING, OR PLAYING WITH LITTLE BIRDS - IT'S CAMP LAW I GET TO DO ANYTHING WITH 'EM I WANT!
USUALLY I KILLS THEM, CUZ I LIKES THAT, BUT SOMETIMES I RAPES THEM, WHEN THEY'RE A PROPER SHAPE!
YES I DO!
4

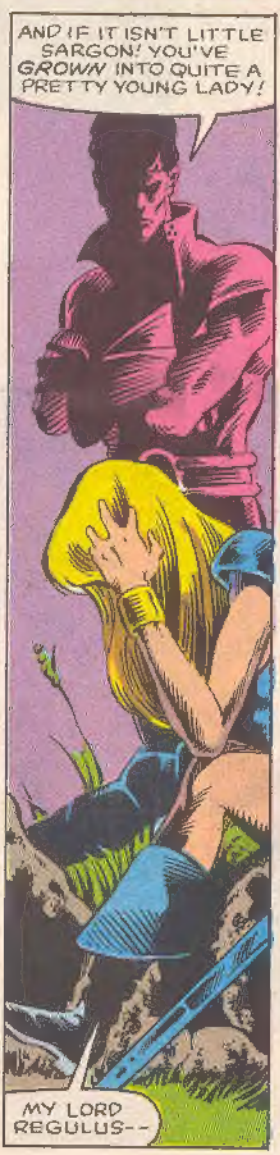
LIKE HELL YOU WILL, SOLDIER!
I MAY NOT BE MUCH, BUT I'M MORE THAN YOU CAN HANDLE!
MUCH? YOU'RE A LITTLE PIECE OF MEAT, THAT'S ALL.
SAY THAT AGAIN, SARGEANT--I DON'T THINK I HEARD YOU THE FIRST TIME!
I'M NOT SURE I LIKE THE CHAIN OF COMMAND IN THIS MAN'S ARMY--I THINK IT COULD DO WITH A LITTLE--
--WHAT--WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME--WHAT ARE YOU DOING--??
5

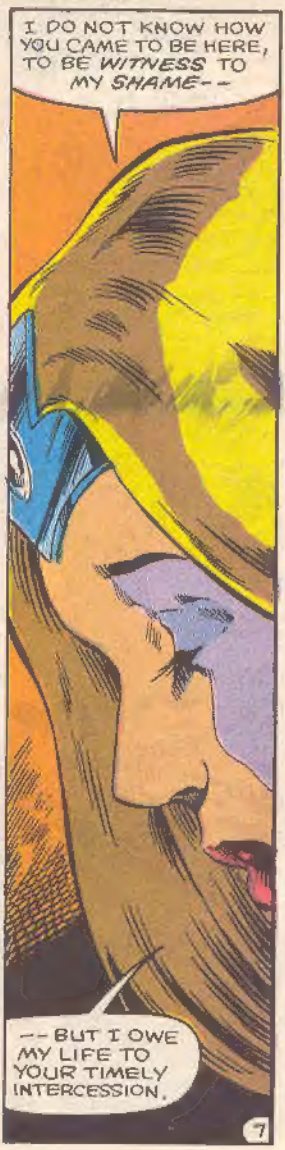
MY LIFE--EBBING AWAY--I'M DYING--! BUT THE GIFT--CANNOT BE TAKEN AWAY--NOT LIKE THIS!
OH YES, THE GIFT OF FEN-RA--THE GIFT OF LIFE!
I THOUGHT I DETECTED ONE OF YOU HIDING OUT HERE!
MY ALLY PANGOLIN WOULD NO DOUBT LOVE TO HAVE A REMATCH WITH YOU--
BUT NOW YOU BELONG TO THE DEMONS OF DIS!
WHA--?
SHE BELONGS TO NOTHING BUT FEN-RA!
AND IF IT'S REMATCHES YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, YOU TALK TO ME--
LORD REGULUS! YOU WERE A FOOL TO COME HERE--!
A FOOL? IT WAS YOU WHO STOLE THE HEART OF THE SUNRISE FROM ME--YOU WHO MADE FUTILE MY QUEST OF AGES--!
I HAVE COME ACROSS THE UNIVERSES TO FIND THE HEART, MONSTER--TO FIND YOU--AND NOW THAT I HAVE--
6

YOUR POWER TO ME, ARCHANGEL!
--WE SHALL SEE WHO IS THE FOOL!
WITH PLEASURE, LORD REGULUS, WITH PLEASURE!

NO! THE HEART--!
WE SHALL FIND IT, DEMON--

--WITHOUT YOUR HELP.


AND IF IT ISN'T LITTLE SARGON! YOU'VE GROWN INTO QUITE A PRETTY YOUNG LADY!
MY LORD REGULUS--


I DO NOT KNOW HOW YOU CAME TO BE HERE, TO BE WITNESS TO MY SHAME--
--BUT I OWE MY LIFE TO YOUR TIMELY INTERCESSION.

IT MUST HAVE BEEN TERRIBLE FOR YOU, LITTLE ONE, TO HAVE BEEN FORCED TO LIVE AMONG THESE RUDE AND HORRIBLE FOLK--
--BUT IT'S ALL RIGHT: I'M HERE. YOU'RE SAFE NOW.
I DON'T NEED YOUR PROTECTION REGULUS! I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW I BECAME FEN-RA'S MISTRESS OF WAR IN YOUR ABSENCE! I WAS JUST RECOUPING MY STRENGTH FOR ANOTHER ASSAULT ON PANGOLIN!
I COULD NEVER DOUBT YOU, MILADY! I AM AT YOUR SERVICE, O MISTRESS OF WAR--!
YOU-- I'LL SHOW YOU--!
THE TIME FOR WAITING IS PAST! THE BATTLE BEGINS AGAIN!
WITH THE HORN I SHALL ROUSE THE CAMP! AND THIS WORLD SHALL SOON KNOW THAT SARGON FIGHTS AGAINST THEM!
THE SOUND ECHOES ALONG THE HILLS AND SOON IT IS ANSWERED BY COMMOTION DOWN BELOW.
NOW LET THEM COME.
YOU HAVE A STRANGE LOOK ON YOUR FACE, MILORD OUTRIDER. WHAT IN THE ABYSS ARE YOU THINKING?
JUST THAT SHE HASN'T CHANGED AT ALL, ARCHANGEL-- NOT ONE BIT!
NEXT: DYING OF THE LIGHT!
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